

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PORT O 00812 132054Z  
ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00  
DODE-00 CG-00 DOTE-00 L-03 EB-08 EA-10 /047 W  
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P 132025Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2147

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 0812

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MARR, TD  
SUBJECT: OMEGA TRINIDAD

REF: A) PORT OF SPAIN 563; B) OSLO 1140

1. I MET WITH FM DONALDSON ON MARCH 13 IN FOLLOW-UP OF MY EARLIER DISCUSSION WITH PERMSEC BALLAH REQUESTING RECONSIDERATION OF THE CLOSING OF OMEGA TRINIDAD. AFTER I HAD EXPLAINED THE REASONS FOR USG INTEREST IN THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF OMEGA HERE UNTIL THE AUSTRALIAN STATION BECOMES OPERATIONAL, DONALDSON REPLIED AS HE HAD PREVIOUSLY THAT OMEGA COULD BE POLITICALLY EMBARRASSING TO THE GOTT. THE OPPOSITION HAD RAISED THE ISSUE IN PARLIAMENT LAST YEAR AND THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE AT THAT TIME, WHICH HAD BEEN BASED ON INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE USG, HAD TURNED OUT NOT TO BE CORRECT. THE GOTT DID NOT WANT TO BE CONFRONTED WITH ANOTHER QUESTION ON OMEGA IN PARLIAMENT AND HAVE TO GIVE A DIFFERENT ANSWER. I POINTED OUT THAT SINCE THE BASES AGREEMENT NOW HAD EXPIRED, THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE PROVISIONS OF THAT AGREEMENT AND OMEGA WAS CLEARER THAN EVER, AND THIS FACT SHOULD BE HELPFUL TO THE GOVERNMENT IN ANSWERING ANY QUESTION THAT MIGHT ARISE IN PARLIAMENT.

2. DONALDSON THEN ASKED ABOUT THE STRUCTURE OF THE MANAGEMENT, ORGANIZATION AND CONTROL OF OMEGA TRINIDAD  
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PAGE 02 PORT O 00812 132054Z

AS COMPARED TO OTHER STATIONS. SPECIFICALLY, HE WANTED TO KNOW HOW OMEGA IN JAPAN, ARGENTINA, NORWAY, REUNION AND LIBERIA WAS SET UP AND MANAGED, AS WELL AS WHAT SUCH ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE FOR THE FUTURE AUSTRALIAN STATION. I REMINDED HIM THAT THE DRAFT PROPOSAL WE HAD PRESENTED IN JULY, 1977, HAD INCLUDED PROVISIONS FOR GOTT PARTICIPATION IN THE MANAGEMENT

AND OPERATION OF OMEGA TRINIDAD AND UNDERTOOK TO PROVIDE HIM THE INFORMATION HE REQUESTED.

3. DONALDSON THEN SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF OMEGA HAD BEEN RAISED IN THE NEW ZEALAND PARLIAMENT (HE DID NOT INDICATE WHEN) AFTER LOCAL PRESS STORIES HAD APPEARED ON THE SUBJECT. THE ISSUE THERE, AS HE UNDERSTOOD IT, HAD BEEN WHAT WOULD HAPPEN CONCERNING OMEGA IF A WAR BROKE OUT AND HOW WOULD NEW ZEALAND BE AFFECTED (WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT HE WAS REFERRING TO IN MENTIONING NEW ZEALAND AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANY BACKGROUND ON IT THE DEPARTMENT CAN PROVIDE. OUR SUSPICION IS THAT THIS IS A MISTAKEN REFERENCE TO THE DEBATE OVER THE AUSTRALIAN STATION). DONALDSON CONTINUED THAT THE GOTT WOULD WANT ANY AGREEMENT ON OMEGA TO CONTAIN "ASSURANCES THAT A MEASURE OF PROTECTION" WOULD BE AFFORDED TO MINIMIZE THE POSSIBILITY OF TRINIDAD'S BECOMING A MILITARY TARGET IN THE EVENT OF INTERNATIONAL HOSTILITIES. OMEGA, OF COURSE, DID HAVE MILITARY USES, AND TRINIDAD WOULD NOT WANT TO BE "CAUGHT NAKED WITHOUT PROTECTION" ON THAT ACCOUNT IF INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS AROSE. THE GOTT REGARDED THIS AS A KEY CONSIDERATION AND WANTED TO KNOW WHAT THE USG WOULD BE PREPARED TO PROPOSE FOR MINIMIZING THE POTENTIAL RISKS TO T&T UNDER A NEW AGREEMENT. DONALDSON CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT HE HAD BEEN AUTHORIZED

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PAGE 03 PORT O 00812 132054Z

BY CABINET TO RAISE THE FOREGOING POINTS (PARA 2 AND 3). IF THE USG WOULD MAKE PROPOSALS WHICH ADEQUATELY TOOK THESE POINTS INTO ACCOUNT, CABINET WOULD BE PREPARED TO GIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION TO OUR REQUEST.

4. DONALDSON MENTIONED IN PASSING THE DEMARCHE MADE BY NORWAY IN NEW YORK ON OMEGA (REF B). EMBASSY IS NOT AWARE WHAT OTHER PREPRESENTATIONS, IF ANY, HAVE BEEN MADE BY INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS TO GOTT.

5. DONALDSON CONCLUDED BY SAYING HE WOULD BE AWAY FOR MOST OF THE NEXT TWO WEEKS BUT WOULD LIKE TO MEET WITH ME AGAIN ON OMEGA RIGHT AFTER EASTER (MARCH 26).

6. COMMENT. DONALDSON'S LOW-KEY PRESENTATION DID NOT CONVEY ANY SENSE OF PRESSURE OR URGENCY. WE CONSIDER IT A POSITIVE SIGN THAT HE IS KEEPING THE DOOR OPEN ON OMEGA AND HAS SPECIFIC CABINET AUTHORITY TO DO SO. AT PRESENT IT APPEARS THAT SATIDFACTORY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF OMEGA TRINIDAD PLUS THE "ASSURANCES OF A MEASURE OF PROTECTION" FOR TRINIDAD IN THE CASE OF HOSTILITIES

WHICH HE INQUIRED ABOUT MAY BE THE KEY TO RESOLVING  
THE OMEGA ISSUE. I WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING THE  
INFORMATION HE REQUESTED AND FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS BY  
MARCH 24 AT THE LATEST.  
FOX

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## Message Attributes

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